



U.S. House of Representatives
Joe Cunningham
1st District, South Carolina

July 17, 2019

The Honorable Richard V. Spencer
Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350

Mr. Thomas McCaffery
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
of Defense for Health Affairs
4000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Spencer and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary McCaffery:

I write to respectfully request additional information with regard to Department of the Navy and Defense Health Agency's plans to downsize the civilian workforce aboard Naval Hospital (NH) Beaufort in South Carolina. On July 1st, my office received notification that the Department may eliminate up to 49 civilian positions—nearly 25 per cent of the total civilian workforce—as a result of “realignment or reorganization”.

As you know, NH Beaufort provides essential medical services to an estimated 35,000 servicemembers, retirees, and military families in South Carolina. Given the high concentration of veterans in the area and the close proximity of Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort and Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, these services are indispensable to our community in the Lowcountry.

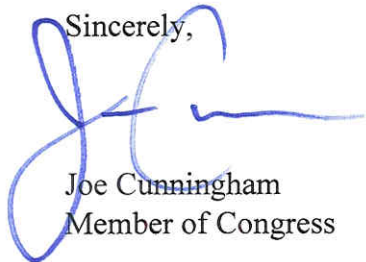
That is why I am deeply concerned about the effects these cuts in personnel may have on the services provided at NH Beaufort, especially in light of the ongoing reform of the broader military health system, which resulted in the closure of the hospital's urgent care clinic. Going forward, I hope the Department will conduct these reforms in an open and transparent manner and will carefully consider how any planned reductions in medical services may impact surrounding communities, especially in rural areas where alternative treatment options may be limited.

In accordance with House Report 116-84, the Department is required to provide Congress details of the analysis used to determine changes to medical services at military treatment facilities, to include details on the capacity of the local community, costs, impacts on providers, and risks to the served population. In addition, I request a briefing from the Department that addresses the following items:

- What are the duties, job titles, and grades of the 49 Department of the Navy civilian employees who may be impacted as a result of realignment or reorganization at NH Beaufort?
- What, if any, medical or clinical services at NH Beaufort would be affected by the loss of these 49 positions?
- Was any analysis conducted into how this loss may affect the surrounding community? If not, why?
- Are there any future plans to further downsize the workforce or otherwise curtail services aboard NH Beaufort? If so, was there any analysis conducted into how such actions could affect the surrounding community?
- Was any analysis conducted into how reductions of services or personnel will affect services at the Beaufort VA Clinic, which is co-located with NH Beaufort?

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for everything you do in support of our nation's servicemembers and their families.

Sincerely,



Joe Cunningham
Member of Congress